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ABSTRACT

This paper presents 40 writing assignments and 16 scoring guides used by elementary and junior high school teachers who participated in a writing research and resources project in connection with primary trait scoring. Not all of the assignments presented were originated by the teachers: some were taken or adapted from a textbook; occasionally they came from another source. Tables are included showing the grade level intended for each assignment, classifying assignments by mode (expressive, explanatory, persuasive), and showing the mode of assignment by grade level. Where scoring guides are provided, the purpose is nearly always present in a statement of the primary trait. Several of the assignments offered specify a mix of modes by asking students both to describe or explain something and to tell how they feel about it. All of the offered assignments involve considerable prewriting activity and the use of some verbal information about strategies to use in achieving the purpose of the writing, though few of the written assignments specify those strategies. A number of the scoring guides included in the paper emphasize organization and form as criteria; sometimes quantity of detail or argument or use of a particular type of language differentiates categories. Nearly all guides presented exhibit some abstract language which admits of subjective judgment on the part of the reader and testifies to the difficulty of formulating criteria in specific terms. (HOD)

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Sample Exercises and Scoring Guides

Developed in Conjunction with the Writing Research and Resources Project

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Sample Exercises and Scoring Guides

This document presents assignments used by teachers participating in the Writing Research and Resources Project in connection with PTS and, in some cases, scoring guides which were used with the assignments. Not all the assignments were originated by the teachers: some were taken or adapted from a textbook; occasionally from another source. Some were assignments teachers had used before they were acquainted with PTS but which were adaptable to its use. In most instances, scoring guides were created by teachers, in others by the students with some guidance from the teacher. Following the presentation of assignments and guides a brief discussion analyzes some features of the assignments. (For more information, see the report entitled, "Uses of the Primary Trait System: A Collaborative Descriptive Research Project.")

These materials emerged from a very short data collection period (late August to mid-November) and a very small sample: eleven teachers and classrooms. It is certainly reasonable to assume (and teachers made statements to indicate) that considerable refinement would have been visible had there been a longer period of use and data collection.

Assignments Used by Teachers Participating in Writing Research and Resources Project

1. Tennis Shoes: Pretend that you are a pair of tennis shoes. You've done all kinds of things with your owner in all kinds of weather. Now you are being picked up again by your owner. Tell what you, as the tennis shoes, think about what's going to happen to you. Tell how you feel about your owner. NOTE: One participating school system altered the traditional scoring guide slightly when they used it as a district-wide pre-test of student writing ability. This assignment was created by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) staff. (See Scoring Guide 1.)

2. Puppy Dog Letter: Pretend that your family is moving to a new apartment. The landlord has refused to let your puppy live there. Write the landlord a letter, trying to convince him to let you keep your puppy in the new apartment. (NAEP)

3. Convince me (the teacher) that you deserve a Halloween party (or time to enjoy a film and treats) on Friday in spite of the class' recent unacceptable behavior. Write a letter to persuade me to let you have the party.

4. Pretend you are a piece of clothing or something to wear. You've done all kinds of things with your owner in many places. Tell how you look and feel. Tell about your life with your owner. Tell how you feel about your owner.

5. Camera Story (George Eastman's Birthday). Write a narrative (story) about a camera and you: your favorite picture, how you got your camera, a picture of importance. (See Scoring Guide 5.)

6. Assume the role of any character that you would like to be on Halloween. Write a letter to Dracula at his castle in Transylvania, Rumania. Tell him who you are and how you feel about yourself. Ask Dracula for any help or advice you need to help make your Halloween more fun and exciting. Use the Dear Dracula sheet to help you remember good friendly letter form.

When you have completed your letter in your spiral and have edited for form and mechanical errors, trade spirals with a partner. Read your partner's "Dear Dracula" letter. Assume the role of Dracula. Tell something about yourself and how you feel about the letter received. As Dracula, write an answer to the letter that will provide advice and answer any questions written in the letter received.

Return the spiral to owner and read your answer. Edit the answer for errors in form and mechanics. (See Scoring Guide 6.)

7. Write about "How I Feel About Coming to This School". Tell your best friend so that he can easily understand your feelings. (See Scoring Guide 7.)

8. September 2, 1666, was the day the Great Fire of London began. The four-day blaze spread over 436 acres, destroyed 13,000 houses and 89 churches, and left damages of over 10,000,000 pounds. In our city there are 30 churches, 9000 homes and 29,000 people. Try to imagine the extent of this great fire in London by visualizing the size of our city. Fires have destroyed other great American cities such as Chicago and San Francisco. Imagine how the people of our city would feel and act if it was destroyed by a great fire. Write about people and things in your life that you value and would not want to lose in a great disaster. Explain why they are of value to you. How would you strive to replace valuables lost in a disaster? (See Scoring Guide 8.)

9. Look at the Norman Rockwell print and determine what story the picture is telling. Decide in what voice you will tell the story to the class audience and allow us to recognize the voice in which the story is told and the picture from which the story evolves. (See Scoring Guide 9.)

10. You are running for class president. Write a campaign speech to persuade classmates to vote for you.

11. Pretend you are the principal of our school. Write a letter to the parents explaining the school rules.

12. Pretend you a member of a tribe of Indians. Write a diary of one week of your life with the tribe. Write details that are true examples of the work, play, and rituals of your tribe.

13. Pretend that you are a cavalryman or his wife who lives in a fort near an Indian village. Write a letter to your family back East telling them about your life at the fort. Urge your family to join you as soon as possible or

14. Pretend that you are a member of a war party headed by Chief _____. Write an account of one of your exciting adventures or battles. Be sure that this is based on a real chief of your tribe and a real battle in which he has participated.

15. Pretend that you are a member of a wagon train headed west through Indian Territory. You stop at a friendly Indian village for one day and one night. Write a good description of the village and what you saw there.

16. Pretend that you live on the East Coast. One of your relatives is about to leave for the western frontier. In play form, set down your last conversation together. Reveal your feelings and those of your relative about this important event.

17. You are an Indian chief who is about to die. Your son will be the new chief of the tribe. Write a short history of the tribe as the chief would explain it to his son to help him understand your pride and values of your culture.

18. Imagine you are another person in this classroom. As that person, observe yourself. Write a paragraph describing yourself as that other person sees you. Tell what kind of a person you are and why. (See Scoring Guide 18.)

19. Choose one of the situations below. Imagine that you are the first animal in the statement. Tell what is happening and what you think and feel. Be sure to express your feelings strongly. (See Scoring Guide 19.)

1. A mouse chased into your bedroom by a cat.
2. A horse that has just lost the race.
3. A bear being chased by a hunter.
4. A lion in the zoo.
5. A lion running loose in Africa.

20. Write a paragraph which shows how you feel about school. Use vivid, sensory detail to create the image you have of school. Let the paragraph reveal your feelings, as good description should. (See Scoring Guide 20.)

21. Describe the classroom you are in now as you see it from where you are sitting. (Taken from SRA Composition Skills Book 2)

22. Describe your classroom as the custodian probably sees it, after all classes are finished. (Taken from SRA Composition Skills Book 2)

23. Think back to a conflict or argument you had with someone. First tell about that event from your point of view. Then tell about it from the other person's point of view. (Taken from SRA Composition Skills Book 2)

24. Close this book and look at it. Then write a description of the book for a person who cannot see it. Be sure to describe the book in a manner that will be clear and that will make sense to the reader. (Taken from SRA Composition Skills Book 1) (See Scoring Guide 24.)

25. Look carefully at the picture on the top of page 28. Take the viewpoint of the man who is giving the oath or one of the jurors. Tell what is happening and what you are thinking. (Taken from SRA Composition Skills Book 1) (See Scoring Guide 25.)

26. Pretend you have been selected to tell an adult who has never seen or been in our school during class time what our school is like. Explain clearly what school is like. (See Scoring Guide 26.)

27. Write about our creative dance class - where and when we meet and the name of the teacher. Tell the instructions she gave you for when you come every week.

28. Pretend you are our kickball. Write three paragraphs: one to tell about your first owner and how you got in the street, one to tell about your life at this school, and one about your future.

29. Pretend you are a desk. Tell some things that happened to you in past years. Tell about your owner this year.

30. Write about a relative - mom, dad, brother, etc. Describe this person, how you feel about him/her, and some things you do together.

31. Write a story about your best friend. Tell about this person, why you like him/her, and what you do together.

32. Describe one thing you saw this summer. Tell all about it so that the reader can really picture it.

33. Write a poem on "These are the things I love" using specific nouns and descriptive modifiers.

34. Describe our cafeteria at lunchtime using sights, sounds, and smells. (See Scoring Guide 34.)

35. Pretend the reader is a stranger seeing the cafeteria for the first time through your eyes. Use the scoring guide (Scoring Guide 34) to create a fantasy cafeteria. Be specific about what you want done to make this a fantasy cafeteria. To begin with, make a list under each of the three columns: sights, sounds, smells. Then work your items into a well developed paragraph.

36. The Personality Sketch. Purpose: revelation of character through selective details. (Prewriting activity: the interview, a talk-write approach) Write a personality sketch of your partner. Show, rather than tell, what the person is like through anecdotes and actions. Be selective in your choice of details.

Suggested rhetorical techniques:

1. Start in medias res (in the middle of the action):

"It is 11 P.M. when Ben Rossen brakes his eighteen-wheeler and turns into the Union 76 truck stop in Ontario, California."

--"The Trucker Mystique"
Newsweek

2. Let the subject reveal himself, his attitudes and values, by his actions: He looks in the mirror or Her eyes stay on the ground.
3. Keep the piece in the present tense to establish an immediacy of tone.
4. Select only those details that best define the subject: The scene or snippet of conversation, her loves and hates, clothes and gestures, habits and haunts, etc.

(See Scoring Guide 36.)

37. Write for Your Life. Purpose: persuasion of judges through adopted persona. (Prewriting activity: brainstorming of possible personae in peer groups) Game setting: 2001, the United States of America. Situation: Exact methods of genetic reproduction have been developed. Because human life can now be reproduced to specification through cloning, top-level executives have decided to eliminate "MISFITS" and "LOW-YIELD SOCIAL CONTRIBUTORS" from society. For "implementation purposes" (of course, these executives talk in double-speak), a "misfit" has been defined as a "person who places strong emphasis on individualism and, therefore, contributes less than is acceptable to the maintenance of the common good." A "low-yield social contributor" has been defined as "one who abides by the democratic ideal of uniformity but who adds little or nothing to the good of society by his presence in it." Suspected members of each of the two categories have been identified and contacted by government agencies and are requested to either show cause as to why they should not be eliminated or to waive this option and to report for execution in the name of the common good.

Of course, you have all been selected by the federal government for possible removal. Therefore, all of you must demonstrate that your continued existence is necessary or perish. Your first reaction will be to answer the government by using emotional appeals, but you will later realize that only the cold light of reason will appeal to a government so uninvolved with moral questions. You must argue logically and well or lose the game.

Rules: Students must submit their arguments to their peer groups on Monday for judgment. The peer group will select one person to possibly live; the rest will be eliminated. The best paper selected by each peer group will be used for the purpose of conducting a trial. The person going on trial should select a defense attorney and two defense witnesses from his peer group, also. A prosecuting attorney and a jury of five will be chosen from the class for each trial. The prosecuting attorney will line up his witnesses. The trials will then commence. After the arguments have been presented, the jury will return verdicts. The winners of the game will be presented with the very highest classwork grades; the losers ----. WRITE FOR YOUR LIFE!

Suggested rhetorical strategies:

1. Assume a persona. Make the tone of speech match this character.
2. Decide whether to use a rational or irrational argument. Use an ethical, emotional or intellectual appeal, Aristotle.
3. Adopt a definite stance, humility or intellectuality or sarcasm.
4. Employ hyperbole or understatement or litotes.

(See Scoring Guide 37.)

38. Auden's "The Unknown Citizen" and Robinson's "Richard Cory" - A Critical Analysis. Purpose: explanation of two poems through comparisons and contrasts. Write a critical essay that explains thematic similarities and differences between Richard Cory and the Unknown Citizen. Point out specific techniques used by the poets to convey their meanings. (Prewriting activity: reading strategies for peer group discussion of interpretations) (See Scoring Guide 38.)

39. The Saturation Report. Purpose: dramatization of reality through stylistic techniques. (Prewriting activities: examination of models by new journalists and centers of gravity selected from free writing drafts) Write a highly stylized feature article that captures the atmosphere of an event or the status life of a person. Use techniques traditionally reserved for the novelist - symbolic details, idiomatic language, stream-of-consciousness patterns of thought, even punctuation. And more. In short, heighten reality.

Rhetorical strategies:

1. Select material carefully. Choose the telling scene or details symbolic of the subject's status life (secret habits and favorite haunts, mannerisms and gestures, clothing and friends, idols and possessions).
2. Use cumulative sentence structures to create a dense texture of details.
3. Catch the dialogue, the idioms, and thought patterns of the subject. Literally filter reality through the subject's consciousness.
   e.g. I began free-associating...Suddenly I could see Lexington Avenue where I live in Manhattan...It was the look of ordinary citizens that was so horrible. Their bones were going. They were dissolving. Women who had once been clicking and clogging down the avenue up on five-inch platform soles, with their pants seam smartly cleaving their declivities, were now mere denim and patent-leather blobs...oozing and inching and suppurating along the sidewalk like amoebas or ticks...A cab driver puts his arm out the window...and it just dribbles down the yellow door like hot Mazola.
4. Draw up a catalogue, a list.
   e.g. Even the impeccable Lord Jeffrey, editor of the Edinburgh Review, had cried - actually blubbered, boohooed, snuffled and sighed - over the death of Dickens' Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop.

   Bangs manes bouffant Beatle cap butter faces brush-on lashes decal eyes puffy sweaters flailing leather blue jeans stretch pants stretch jeans honeydew bottoms eclair shanks elf boots ballerinas Knight slippers, hundreds of them, those flaming little buds, bobbing and screaming, rocketing around inside the Checker Dome.

   Cars, miles of cars, in every direction, millions of cars, pastel cars, aqua green, aqua blue, aqua beige, aqua bluff, aqua dawn, aqua dusk, aqua Malacca, Malacca lacquer, Cloud lavender, Assassin pink, Rake-a-cheek raspberry, Nude Strand coral, Honest thrill orange, and Baby Fawn Lust cream-colored cars are all going to the stock-car races, and that ole mothering North Carolina sun keeps exploding off the windshields. Mother dog!

5. Experiment with dots, dashes, exclamation points, italics, and even punctuation that never existed before .....
.....

6. Try interjections, shouts, nonsense words, onomatopoeia, mimesis, pleonams, the continual use of the historical present.
e.g. There goes (Varoom! Varoom!) That Kandy-Colored (Thphhhhhh!) Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby (Bahghhh!) Around the Bend (Brummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm)...
Hai-ai-ai-

Teacher (and/or Student)-Made Scoring Guides
to Accompany Some of the Preceding Exercises

Scoring Guide 1

0. Other papers. These papers do not fit the categories for various reasons, for example, blank papers or papers totally on another subject.

1. No establishment of the role. Student compositions assigned to this category lack the fundamental purpose of the assignment; that is, they do not show evidence of a clearly established entry into the imaginary role of the object. Some of these writings are about the object or about related activities. They are, in effect, limited to observation and do not achieve participation in the role. Other writings that would be assigned to category 1 might imply or project a role that cannot be definitely established as that of the object. These compositions may be so vague that they do not contain any details that are applicable either to the role of the object or to the status of having an owner, or they may contain details that are inconsistent with the role of the object or with the status of having an owner. They are marked by many errors highly distracting to the reader.

2. Establishment of the role. Writings assigned to this category explicitly or implicitly establish the role of the object, but the elaboration is insufficient to endow the role with a distinctive personality or relationship to the owner. Some of these compositions, for example, simply report shared experiences with the owner without implying or directly expressing any feelings about the experiences of the owner. Others express feelings with little or no reference to particular experiences to account for the feelings, and still others report contradictory feelings or experiences and thus project an inconsistent personality or relationship to the owner. These papers contain a number of errors distracting to the reader.

3. Clear elaboration of the role. Compositions in this category not only establish the role of the object, but also elaborate the role with details sufficient to endow it with a clearly identifiable character, personality or relationship to the owner. Although successful in clearly elaborating the role, these compositions may contain a few passages of irrelevant details, of mere fact lacking in expressive purpose, of highly generalized information, or brief changes and shifts away from the dominant personality or relationship to the owner. Overall, writings in this category are less consistent, concrete, or appropriate in elaboration than category 4 papers. These papers may contain a few errors distracting to the reader.

4. Vivid and consistent elaboration of the role. Student writings assigned to this category consistently elaborate the role with vivid details that project a distinct personality and relationship to the owner. Often highly inventive, these compositions are for the most part very carefully elaborated, and they contain no lapses or irrelevancies in detail. They contain few, if any, errors.

Scoring Guide 5

Primary Trait: Expression of feeling through narration of recollected details

1. Little or no narration
   These compositions merely list details providing little or no narrative structure or sequence to link the details to one another. Thus they do not contain even the bare outlines of a story with which to justify feelings.

2. Minimal narration of a story
   These writings contain the outlines of a story, but they are vaguely, and/or inconsistently, and/or minimally detailed. Crucial parts of the story may also be missing, so that the sequence of events is not plausibly explained or explainable.

3. Successful narration of a story
   These papers contain stories which are moderately and appropriately detailed, so as to convey a clear and precise expression of attitude or feeling. A few details may be irrelevant or inconsistent, and the story may not be fully developed at all points, but the overall piece is narratively controlled.

4. Inventive and consistent narration of a story
   These writings tell stories that are fully developed, highly expressive, as well as amply, imaginatively, and fully vividly detailed.

Scoring Guide 6

Primary Trait: Expression of feeling through elaboration

1. No established role. Respondent writes about a Halloween character but role is never related to any attribute or activity of the character. No request for advice.

2. Little elaboration of role. Establishes the role of a Halloween character, but is not distinctive and has little personality. Feelings are not related to any experiences and role is inconsistent. Irrelevant questions and request for advice.

3. Good elaboration of role. Expresses attitudes and feelings; develops shared experiences with Dracula and develops particular character and personality. May include reporting sections with some details irrelevant to personality or relationship with Dracula.

4. Inventive and consistent elaboration of role. Use of vivid and creative details to sustain the role. Does not lapse out of role and includes few if any irrelevancies.

Scoring Guide 7

Primary Trait: Expression of feeling through point of view

1. No entry into the school world. Writes about home, family or some other school. Only a single statement or the information is too disjointed to make a point. Random details, bits of information or lists of information that do not create a situation. Also include pure description, only report what's in the school.

2. Students have entered the school world but without the control and consistency necessary to create a structured presentation. No internal transitions and details. Ideas related but do not make a whole. Little imagination on the part of the writer to create a story. You do not feel a mood has been created, or at least it is underdeveloped or developed in a helter-skelter way.

3. Good entry into the world of school. Papers generally competent. Evidence of control and consistency to create a structured presentation. Often there are strong topic sentences and good transitions, however, quality is marred by uneven, skeletal development. Details inadequate, excessive, or unclear. Attitudes stated and somewhat supported, but not enough to "help friend feel." A definite mood is not created. The underdeveloped paper has a definite beginning and end, yet material does not fill out the structure or it is contrived. The unevenly developed papers either have excessive details or the structure is oddly filled out.

4. Emotive and consistent entry into the school world. Loose ends have been tied up or cut off (although a strong paper without complete closure can be rated in this category). Papers are consistent, evenly developed. Attitudes are expressed so a definite mood is created. You do "feel" the experience. The structure is unified and supported by imagination and evocative details.

Scoring Guide 8

Primary Trait: Explanation through significant ordering of detail

1. No explanatory ordering of detail. Dominated by disjunctive listing of disparate facts and ideas with little or no explanation of facts and ideas. Some papers are brief, consisting of only one or two statements about things of value to the writer. Others offer moderate to lengthy listings of facts but in unconnected sentences that record information in random order. Others move slightly beyond disconnected reporting to include one or two bits of related information but they are slight in proportion to the whole paper, which is characterized by the tendency to report disparate facts in random order without explanation.

2. Some explanatory ordering of details. These papers are characterized by a tendency to group and connect facts or ideas in small clusters containing two or three bits of related information. Some of these papers are made up almost entirely of such groupings. Others waver between small explanatory groupings and mere listing, but even in these pieces, at least 50 percent of the composition consists of connected clusters of information. In both types, the writing moves abruptly from one cluster or bit of information to the next with little or no evidence of transition. Overall, these papers offer a series of rudimentary explanations.

3. Explanatory order of detail but without an overall principle of unity and development. These papers are distinguished by the fact that they discuss several topics, one or more of which they explain at length, by selecting ordering, expanding, and connecting related material so as to produce extended explanations. But the several topics are not linked to one another through an overall principle of unity and development. Some develop two or three main topics; others develop only one topic which dominates the paper. Both types are likely to have points at which they drift into isolated details, irrelevant facts, or brief clusters. Neither type achieves the total unification of material to be found in category 4 papers.

4. Systematic explanation of detail through an overall principle of unity and development. These papers are distinguished by the presence of an overall principle of unity in terms which they select, order, connect, and expand facts and ideas, so as to produce a totally coherent and developed explanation. The unifying strategy may be narrative, thematic, analytic, or comparative. Whatever the strategy, it pervades the paper, and serves not only to connect individual bits of information one to another, but also to set them all within the context of an overarching framework for understanding the subject matter.

Scoring Guide 9

Primary Trait: Expression of feeling through elaboration of a point of view

1. No entry into the imaginative world of the picture. Students write about some aspect of the picture but details are too few or too disjointed to make a point, create a situation, or tell a story. Some papers may be quite long yet merely describe the picture, reporting details in it and thus remaining outside of the picture rather than entering into the world it represents.

2. Entry into the imaginative world of the picture. These writers have accepted the world of the picture but their compositions lack the control, consistency, and details necessary to create a clearly elaborated and expressively convincing presentation. Narratives may be suggested but not worked out, or they may be developed inconsistently, lacking transitions

and logical connections. Attitudes may be stated but not illustrated, or they may be illustrated with inappropriate or contradictory detail. Details may be offered which do not contradict one another yet do not contribute to the mood or situation. Generally these papers are either underdeveloped or elaborated in a confused and inconsistent manner.

3. Controlled point of view toward the world of picture. These writers have entered into the world of the picture and created a clear and controlled point of view toward the world shown in the picture. Control is evident in strong topic sentences and clear transitions. However, these papers are unevenly developed and inadequately elaborated. Attitudes may be merely named or only slightly detailed, and thus not supported enough to "help you see and feel the experience". Narratives, when used, may display imagination, but are often merely outlined or sketched in and thus have gaps or other signs of unevenness and incompleteness. Papers may also be excessively or disproportionately detailed with material that does not contribute to the attitude or situation, thus elaboration is flawed.

4. Expressively detailed and controlled point of view toward the world of the picture. These writers have entered into the world of the picture and created a controlled and expressively detailed point of view. Narratives are evocatively filled out. Loose ends have been tied up or cut off (although a strong paper with closure can be assigned this category). Attitudes and feelings are conveyed in concrete terms and are consistently developed so that a clear mood and point of view are created implicitly or explicitly. The structure of these compositions is unified and supported throughout by evocative details.

Scoring Guide 18

Primary Trait: Expression of perceptions through role elaboration

0. Person writes about himself from his own point of view, describes another person in the class, or in some other way fails to engage in the task.

1. Person enters the role, but does not sustain it. He may give a purely physical description or a statement of feelings, but does not do both.

2. Person enters the role, but may not sustain it. Gives both physical description and statement of feelings, but does not show a connection or does not make logical connections.

3. Person enters the role and sustains it. Shows connection between description and feelings. Some inconsistencies or problems in organization may prevent a fluent paper. Use of descriptive detail is evident, but may be inconsistent.

4. Person sustains role throughout paper. Vivid elaborative detail. Logical connections between description and feelings. Only one or two minor organizational inconsistencies.

Scoring Guide 19

Primary Trait: Expression of feelings through elaboration of a role

0. Writes on a different topic.

1. Does not become one of the animals or takes the part of the wrong animal. Talks only about what happens, in disjointed ways or tells only how he feels, disjointedly. May have much material off the topic. May slip out of role frequently.

2. Sustains role of correct animal. May only write on happenings or feelings. Much inconsistency. Lack of connections between happenings and feelings.

3. Sustains role. Writes about both happenings and feelings. Shows connections, but not consistently. Some material off topic.

4. Sustains role. Vivid elaborative detail of happenings and feelings. Logical connections between the two. Few if any inconsistencies.

Student-Generated Scoring Guide 20

0. Goes off the topic; writes nothing on the topic.

1. Writes about the topic but didn't create a vivid image and didn't reveal all of his/her feelings. Needs improvement.

2. Not very descriptive. Content makes sense. Needs improvement on unity and organization, unclear descriptions. Gets off the subject a little. Needs improvement in word choice.

3. Has the correct topic. Some vivid detail. Connections somewhat clear between images. Most description leads you to the same image. Some sensory details. It reveals much feeling and some opinion.

4. Paragraph should contain vivid description and detail. It should show clear emotion and create a clear image. All material should relate to the topic in an organized pattern and should not be opinion.

Scoring Guide 24

Primary Trait: Description through significant ordering of detail

0. OFF TASK
   Lack of response to assignment altogether or writing on a different subject.

1. NO DESCRIPTIVE ORDERING OF DETAIL
   These papers are dominated by disconnected listings of facts and ideas with little or no descriptive qualities. They are characterized by the tendency to report facts in random order that do not describe the object.

2. SOME DESCRIPTIVE ORDERING OF DETAIL
   These papers are characterized by a tendency to group and connect facts or ideas in small clusters containing two or three bits of related information. The writing moves abruptly from one cluster or bit of information to the next with little or no evidence of transition. They are not unified enough to adequately describe the object.

3. DESCRIPTIVE ORDER OF DETAIL, BUT WITHOUT AN OVERALL PRINCIPLE OF UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT
   These papers are distinguished by the fact that they produce a description of the object, but lack the overall principle of unity by drifting into isolated details, irrelevant facts, or otherwise distort the description of the object.

4. SYSTEMATIC DESCRIPTION THROUGH AN OVERALL PRINCIPLE OF UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT
   These papers are distinguished by the presence of an overall principle of unity in terms of which they select, order, connect, and expand facts and ideas, so as to produce a totally coherent and developed description of the object.

Scoring Guide 25

Primary Trait: Expression of attitude through elaboration of a point of view

0. OFF TASK
   Lack of response to assignment altogether or writing on a different subject.

1. NO ENTRY INTO THE IMAGINATIVE WORLD OF THE PICTURE
   These papers list details from the picture but do not create a situation, tell a story, or elaborate a point of view. Some papers may be quite long yet merely describe the picture, reporting details in it but remaining outside of the picture and not elaborating a point of view.

2. ENTRY INTO THE IMAGINATIVE WORLD OF THE PICTURE
These papers have accepted the world of the picture but their compositions lack control, consistency, and detailing needed to create a clearly elaborated presentation. Details may be offered which do not contribute to the mood or situation.

3. CONTROLLED POINT OF VIEW TOWARD THE WORLD OF THE PICTURE
Students whose papers are assigned to this category have entered the world of the picture and created a clear and controlled point of view toward the world shown. Attitudes, however, may be merely named or only slightly detailed.

4. EXPRESSIVELY DETAILED AND CONTROLLED POINT OF VIEW TOWARD THE WORLD OF THE PICTURE
These writers have entered the world of the picture and created a controlled and expressively detailed point of view. Attitudes and feeling are conveyed in concrete terms and are consistently developed so that a clear mood and point of view are created.

Scoring Guide 26

Primary Trait: Explanation through significant ordering of detail

1. NO EXPLANATION THROUGH ORDERING OF DETAIL
These papers are dominated by listings of facts and ideas with little or no explanation of those facts and ideas. These facts are listed in unorganized, random form.

2. SOME EXPLANATORY ORDERING OF DETAIL
These papers have a tendency to group and connect facts or ideas in small clusters contaning two or three bits of related information. The paper may move from one cluster of information to the other with little or no relationship shown.

3. EXPLANATORY ORDERING OF DETAIL, BUT WITHOUT AN OVERALL PRINCIPLE OF UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT
These papers discuss several topics, one or more of which they explain at length. The topics are not, however, linked to one another and lack the unity needed to fully develop the subject.

4. SYSTEMATIC EXPLANATION OF DETAIL THROUGH AN OVERALL PRINCIPLE OF UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT
These papers have an overall unity by which the writer has selected, ordered, connected and expanded ideas and facts so that they provide a fully developed explanation.

Scoring Guide 34

Purpose: Clear and vivid description of the cafeteria at lunchtime, using sensory words

4. VIVID AND CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF THE CAFETERIA AT LUNCHTIME. Student writings assigned to this category consistently describe the cafeteria, addressing all three sensory areas: sight, sound, and smell. Details are selectively interwoven. These papers contain few, if any, mechanical errors.

3. CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF THE CAFETERIA AT LUNCHTIME. Overall, writings in this category are not as vivid and distinctive in their description of the cafeteria as category 4 papers. These papers may contain a few errors distracting to the reader.

2. MINIMAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CAFETERIA. Writings assigned to this category describe the cafeteria, but there is a minimal use of sensory words. The picture painted by the writer cannot be clearly envisioned. These papers contain a number of errors distracting to the reader.

1. FEW, IF ANY, SENSORY WORDS ARE USED IN THIS PAPER. Student compositions assigned to this category lack the fundamental purpose of the assignment. They are marked by many errors highly distracting to the reader.

Scoring Guide 36

Purpose: Revelation of character through selective details

4. DIRECT ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARACTER THROUGH ACTIONS. Student writing assigned to this category shows what the subject is like through anecdotes and actions. The paper focuses on The Big Scene revealing the character of the person or catches his interior thoughts revealing the attitudes and values. The paper is highly textured with connotative details often idiosyncratic and surprising. It contains few, if any, errors.

3. INDIRECT ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARACTER THROUGH NARRATION. Papers in this category tell about rather than show what the subject is like. They are less tightly focused, often covering various aspects of the subject's personality, thus creating a less dominant impression of the subject than a 4 paper. These papers might tell what the subject thinks but do not use such techniques as dialogue or interior monologue, enabling the subject to express his ideas directly. The papers are well textured, containing vivid rather than the connotative details of papers ranking a 4. These papers may contain a few errors distracting to the reader.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHARACTER. Writings assigned to this category explicitly or implicitly establish the character of the subject, but the aspects covered are insufficient to endow the subject with a distinctive personality. Some of these papers, for example, simply report interesting experiences of the subject without implying or directly expressing his attitude toward these experiences. Others express attitudes, likes or dislikes, without reference to particular experiences to account for these feelings. These papers have a mixture of concrete and generic details, lacking in specificity. They contain a number of errors distracting to the reader.

1. LITTLE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHARACTER. Student papers assigned to this category lack the fundamental purpose of the assignment; that is, they do not reveal the character of the subject. They often simply chronicle facts about the subject, marching through from birth or early childhood to adolescence, or are nothing more than a catalogue of likes and dislikes of the subject. The details on these papers are vague, usually stereotypic of any teen-ager rather than one particular person. They are often cast in the past tense. They are marked by many errors highly distracting to the reader.

Student-Generated Scoring Guide 37

Purpose: Persuasion of judge and jury through an adopted persona

4. Student writing in this category persuades the jury through reasons. The given reasons not to be put to death are clever or conniving, inventive or demented. They are often presented as dialectic thought patterns. These patterns have very vivid and minute details; for example, the assumed character is well defined and developed, perhaps explaining his job in detail. Diction in these papers matches the speakers. Especially double-speak or legal jargon may be appropriate to the government or to the character if it fits his/her status.

3. Student writings assigned to this category give several reasons why the person should not be put to death, but the reasons are presented as a list rather than as means of persuasion. These papers contain some kaleidoscope diction or legal diction. Although the overall description is good, it is not as vivid as the wording in a 4 paper.

2. Student writings in this category give only one or two reasons why the person should not be put to death. The writer may even be hostile to the jury. The adopted persona is a simplistic character, a no-name John Doe endowed with no real personality or identified only by occupation. The character definitely has no distinct voice (e.g., a good garbage man will use double negatives). Often the diction in the paper will be mixed, that is, the word choice will not match the character. These papers have general details.

1. Student writings in this category give no reasons why the person should not be eliminated. In fact, the person may even plead to be killed. The character is defined only as a misfit or low yielding social contributor. These papers contain few, if any details. Instead, they do contain Engfish, long abstract strings of words that say nothing. Some of these papers may rely on juvenile smut rather than witty arguments. And they contain many grammar errors.

Student-Generated Scoring Guide 38

4. The best papers will contain surprising interpretations not brought up in class discussions. Or these papers will explain in depth some of the poems' most difficult concepts - the illusions and realities or the ironies of the endings - that the class has cursorily considered. For example, the writer might point out that the illusions are those of the narrators, not the poets. Or the writer will note specific rhetorical techniques such as extended metaphor used by a poet to convey meaning. These insights into the poems will be related powerfully and understandably. They will be backed up by direct quotes as proof of their validity, thus raising the interpretation from the level of personal opinion to a recognizable truth. By the use of quotes the writer, in effect, will elevate certain lines or words as particularly significant and bring them to the attention of the reader. Finally, the 4 paper will probably make a larger number of comparisons and contrasts between the two poems than papers in lower categories.

   The technical proficiency of the writer of a 4 paper will be evident in the general to particular structure of the paper. The opening paragraph will contain general information: authors' full names, poem names, grand theme. The essay will have planned paragraphs, a solid subject evident for each. Sophisticated glue words will hold ideas together. Sometimes successive paragraphs will parallel comparative subjects, thus establishing an inner coherence or unity of parts within the essay. The paper will be written in the present tense, thus giving the information an immediacy or life. The essay will have an intellectual level of diction. It will contain few, if any, grammar errors distracting to the reader.

3. A paper in this category will not explain concepts as fully as a 4 paper. For instance, the writer will understand that the poems contain illusions, but may not be clear on the source of their origination. Or the writer will notice the ironies of the endings but will not completely understand them. The writer may refer to the extended metaphors but will not go into details. Although the writer may compare the authors, the paper will not pick up on the different techniques each poet uses. The paper will have many quotes; it will also contain no proof of some statements written. In short, it will not be as heavily detailed as a 4 paper.

   This essay will have good but inconsistent diction. The writer will use academic wording but will also tend to blend in some high school words.

2. A paper in this category is lacking quality. While it explains some fundamental concepts of the poems, the essay does not describe the poems fully. It is written with very little reflection on the poems' meanings. Perhaps it makes one or two comparisons, but mainly the purpose of the paper is not clear. Certainly the reader will not be able to distinguish who is the better poet from the explication. Ideas that are expressed in a 2 paper are usually without supporting quotes. Also, the writer may not properly explain parts or express the feelings in the poems.

   The paper often repeats ideas. Its diction will be average or below average, perhaps with one or two academic words but mainly teen-age language. It will also catch Engfish or verbiage. Its structure poor and its paragraphs incomplete, the essay will be generally weak. Last, the paper will probably have many errors, mostly punctuation and some spelling.

1. The paper in this category will show the writer has no idea of the meaning behind the poems, or misunderstands the whole of the poems. Paragraphs will be arranged in any random order, or just one paragraph "block." The commentary may run on from one subject to another abruptly. The paper will contain few or no quotes, no proof. It will be off tone with teen-age slang. Or it will have Engfish to take up space. Overall the paper will be written poorly.

Teacher	Grade Taught	Assignment Number
A	2/3	1, 10, 11
B	4	27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 41
D	4/5	1, 4
C	5/6	1, 2, 3
F	6	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12-17
E	6/7	1
I	7	1, 33, 34, 35
G	7	1, 19, 24, 25, 26
J	8	1, 19, 21, 22, 23
H	8	1, 18, 19, 20
K	11/12	1, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40

Table 1: Grade Level by Assignment

Table 1 shows for what grade level each assignment was intended. It would also appear to indicate that grade level had little to do with whether or not PTS was tried. In the case of one sixth grade teacher, exercises 12-17 are listed as a block rather than each separately because they were all on the same general topic and students had the option of choosing which of the assignments they wished to do.

Expressive	Explanatory	Persuasive	?
1		2	
4		3	
5			
6			
7			
9	8	10	
12	11		13
	14		
16	15		
18	17		
19			
20	21		
23	22		
25	24		
	26		
28	27		
29			
30	.		
31	31		
	32		33
	34		35
36	36		
	38	37	
39		40	
	41		

Table 2: Category of Mode/Assignment

Table 2 classifies assignments by mode (expressive, explanatory, persuasive) and reveals that expressive and explanatory modes were about equally used, with persuasive getting much less attention. A third indication of Table 2 is that some assignments were difficult to categorize, either because the language of the assignment was not specific or because the assignment seemed a combination of modes ("Pretend you are _____ and explain_____").

Grade Level	Mode/Assignment Number			
	Expressive	Explanatory	Persuasive	?
2/3	1	11	10	
4	28,29,20,31	27,31,32,41		
4/5	1,4			
5/6	1		2,3	
6	1,5,6,7,9, 12,16	8,14,15,17		13
6/7	1			
7	1,19,25	24,26,34		33,35
8	1,18,19,20,23	21,22		
11/12	1,36,39	36,38	37,40	

Table 3: Mode by Grade Level

Table 3 shows mode of assignment by grade level. Again, the striking fact is the minimal use of the persuasive mode which was used once at grade 2/3, twice at 5/6, and twice at 11/12. The sample is surely too small and the data collection period too brief to conclude that persuasive writing is used more at any particular grade level; indeed, the data do not indicate that. We speculate that the apparent neglect of persuasive writing in favor of the other modes may be a widespread situation in writing classrooms, since the sample of teachers in this project is probably as likely, if not more so, to teach all modes than teachers generally. The high school teacher in the project, a veteran of seventeen years of teaching, reports that one of her great discoveries during the study is that she has taught little persuasive writing in the past and was not able spontaneously to present to her students a repertoire of rhetorical and stylistic strategies useful for persuasive writing, which she could readily do for expressive and explanatory modes. She wonders, in one of her journal entries during the project, how generally that is true of other writing teachers.

An examination of the assignments shows that the purpose and/or primary trait of the assignment is explicitly stated less than half the time, although it is nearly always implicit. When the purpose is explanation or persuasion, the language is likely to include words like "explain", "describe", "persuade", "convince", whereas it often seems superfluous to use the word "express" in pieces where the purpose is expression. Where scoring guides are provided, purpose is nearly always present in a statement of the primary trait. Some of the assignments can be interpreted in several ways, and indeed some students who responded to an assignment to "explain clearly what school is like" described the physical appearance and the schedule of the school, whereas others wrote what school feels like to them as they experience it, whether they like or dislike it. Several assignments specify a mix of modes by asking students both to describe or explain something and tell how they feel about it.

The assignments clearly set out in whose voice the piece is to be written or it is apparent from the context that it is intended to be the student's own. The intended audience for the writing is far less often mentioned (only about 25% of the assignments specify an audience). In making these statements it must be kept in mind that, in the typical classroom in this study, considerable pre-writing activity occurred and teachers were likely to clarify verbally aspects of the assignments that were not in the written versions. It is also the case that some verbal information about strategies to use in achieving the purpose of the writing was given even though few of the written assignments specify those. Sometimes it is not entirely clear whether language in the written assignment intends to spell out a purpose or a strategy for reaching the purpose.

Construction of a scoring guide appears to demand and result in greater specificity of purpose than does construction of an assignment, although several teachers in the project applied a very general guide which could be adapted to any assignment. When that was done, the scoring categories tended to be (1) little or no achievement of the purpose of the assignment, (2) some achievement of the purpose, (3) good or successful achievement, and (4) inventive and consistent (controlled, systematic, etc.) achievement of

purpose. A number of the scoring guides emphasize organization and form as criteria; sometimes quantity of detail or argument or use of a particular type of language differentiates categories. Frequently some specification about "distracting" errors (grammar, mechanics) is added to the content-oriented criteria in the categories.

Three of the sixteen scoring guides provided were student-generated. The language in those differs little from that of the teacher-made guides. Teachers viewed student participation in scoring guide construction as a good learning device and were generally pleased with students' ability to devise criteria and to score their own or peers' papers using the guides. Nearly all guides exhibit some abstract language which admits of subjective judgment on the part of the reader and testifies to the difficulty of formulating criteria in specific terms.

Whether predictive or analytic use of scoring guides is more effective is an open question, considering the evidence of this study. In some cases students were given copies of the scoring guide when they got the assignment; in others, they saw the guide only after writing a first draft. There were times when student-created scoring guides were made before and after drafting. High school students expressed dislike of having to create a guide before they had written because, until they had grappled with the assignment, they could not easily anticipate what the characteristics of a successful paper might be. They also expressed some uncertainty about the value of the scoring guides generally, saying that the criteria for a "4" were helpful because they set out in a positive fashion what a good paper ought to achieve, but that the other categories were negative and "unfair" because they said what a paper ought <u>not</u> be. Be that as it may, predictive use of scoring guides seems to have the result of helping a student know what is expected and, therefore, what to produce; whereas allowing students to write without benefit of scoring guide seems to have the result of allowing students greater latitude (and greater possibility for "error") in deciding how to approach the assignment. Perhaps each use has its place.